1. **Use of Loudspeakers and Right to religion:** The Bombay High Court recently directed the Maharashtra government to have an **in-built mechanism to control decibel levels** in loudspeakers, and said that use of loudspeakers **not essential part of religion.**
   - **Judicial Observations:** Use of loudspeakers is not an **essential part of any religion** and is not protected under **Article 25 of the Constitution**.
     - Article 25 guarantees the freedom of religion to all citizens. It also gives the right to **freedom of conscience**.
   - **Right to religion:** Article 25-28 guarantees the **fundamental right to freedom of religion** with some reasonable restrictions.
   - **Doctrine of "essentiality":**
     - **Introduction:** Introduced by the SC in the **'Shirur Mutt' case in 1954.**
     - **Court interpretation:** The term religion will include those rituals that are integral to a particular religion.
       - ✓ The responsibility of determining what is included within the ambit of integral religious practices was left with the courts.
     - **Important cases and interpretations:**
       - ✓ **Sri Venkataramana Devaru vs State of Mysore case (1958):** Estrictions on entry into temples for some sections are not integral practice and are unconstitutional and void.
       - ✓ **Aishat Shifa v. state of Karnataka (2022):** Related to hijab Court allowed hijab in schools & colleges and held that the issue is not only related to religious practices but also freedom of expression (Article 19).
2. **Tuberculosis:** According to the World Health Organization's **Global Tuberculosis Report 2024,** India continues to lead in the global TB burden (26% of cases) and is also the hub for drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) and TB deaths.
   - **Global status:** TB remains the leading infectious disease killer globally in 2023.
   - **End TB Targets (2030):** 90% reduction in deaths, 80% reduction in new cases, and zero TB-affected families facing catastrophic costs.
   - **India's Commitment:** Pledged to achieve **End TB targets by 2025**, but COVID-19 delayed progress.

- **Global Burden Leader:** India accounts for 26% of global TB cases and is a hub for drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) and TB deaths.
- **Vulnerable Groups in India:** Miners, stone carvers, undernourished individuals, and those with co-morbidities like diabetes, migrant workers.
  - **Factors:** Undernutrition, overcrowding, silicosis, and lack of multisectoral actions.
- **Extra-pulmonary TB (EP-TB):** Affects organs beyond lungs; 24% of notified cases but often missed due to vague symptoms.
  - **Diagnosis Issues:** Reluctance to notify TB, reliance on advanced tests, and lack of training among doctors delay diagnosis.
  - **Resource Constraints:** Expensive molecular tests (e.g., CBNAAT, Truenat) are available mostly at district levels with operational gaps.

3. **Rhodamine B:** A recent ban issued by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in January 2025 further reinforces these restrictions, prohibiting the use of Rhodamine B in any food-related applications due to increasing evidence of its carcinogenic properties.
   - **About:** Rhodamine B is a synthetic dye known for its bright pink hue, commonly utilised in industries such as textiles, paper, and leather, causes **DNA damage, mutations, and cancer** (liver, bladder tumors observed in animal studies).
   - **Growing Concerns in India:** Illegal Use in Foods: Enhances visual appeal in candies, street foods, and other consumables, violates **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006**.
   - **State-Level Actions in India:** Banned sale of cotton candy with Rhodamine B, states includes:
   - **Tamil Nadu (Feb 2024), Karnataka (Mar 2024), Puducherry, Himachal Pradesh (May 2024).**
   - **Expert Opinions on Synthetic Dyes:**
     - **Carcinogenic Risk:** Due to DNA damage and oxidative stress.
     - **Vulnerable Groups:** Children, elderly, and immunocompromised individuals.
     - **Skin Reactions:** Allergies, redness, pigmentation changes with long-term exposure.
   - **EU Ban:** Initiated in the 1990s over skin sensitization and carcinogenic risks.
4. **World University Ranking:** The Times Higher Education (THE) has recently released the World University Rankings by Subject 2025.
   - **About:** IISc Bengaluru secure rank **99th in Computer Science**, first Indian institution in the top

- 100, improved from the **251-300 band** last year.
- **Delhi University's Recognition:** Ranked in the **301+ band** for **Law and Psychology**.
- **Subject Categories**: Rankings were released for **11 categories**- Arts and Humanities, Business and Economics, Computer Science, Education Studies, Engineering, Law, Life Sciences, Medical and Health, Physical Sciences, Psychology, and Social Sciences.
- **Computer Science (2024): 53 Indian universities** featured, up from **47 in 2024**, IISc ranked **96th** globally.
  - **Top 3:** Oxford University, University of Cambridge, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).
- **Global Dominance: MIT, Stanford, Harvard, Cambridge** consistently in the **top 10** across all 11 subjects.
  - **US leads** in top 10 placements and overall representation across subjects.
  - **Trends: China and East Asian nations** showing significant rise in global rankings.
- **About Times Higher Education (THE):**
  - **Mission**: To be the definitive source of data, insight, and expertise on higher education worldwide.
  - **Data Foundation**: Built on 10 million data points from over 7,000 institutions across 171 countries.
  - **Rankings**: Known for its World University Rankings, which assess university performance on the global stage.

5. **Ad Hoc Judges in High Courts:** Recently, the Supreme Court suggested temporarily appointing retired judges on an ad hoc (as required) basis to address the growing backlog of pending criminal cases before several High Courts.
   - **About:** Proposal under **Article 224A** of the Indian Constitution, allowing retired HC judges to temporarily perform duties with the **President's consent**.
   - **Procedure for Appointment (Article 224A):** Chief Justice of a High Court requests a retired judge's appointment with the **President's approval**.
   - **Appointees:** Receive **allowances as per the President's order**.
     - Hold the **jurisdiction, powers, and privileges** of an HC judge but are not “deemed” as one.

- **2021 SC Directive**: Appointment process must be routed through the **Supreme Court collegium** (CJI + 2 senior-most judges).
- **Conditions for Ad Hoc Appointments (Lok Prahari Case, 2021)**: Vacancies > **20% of sanctioned strength** (excluding proposals).
- **SC's Concerns and Recommendations:** Ad hoc appointments should not **replace regular judge recruitment**.

6. **INS Sarvekshak:** The ship recently completed completed final phase of hydrographic survey of Mauritius.
   - **About:** It is **Hydrographic Survey Ship** of the Indian Navy, based at **Southern Naval Command, Kochi**.
     - **Equipped with advanced systems: Deep Sea Multi-Beam Echo Sounder**, **Side Scan Sonars**, fully automated **digital surveying and processing system**, and Carries an **integral Chetak helicopter** for survey operations.
     - Past foreign cooperation surveys: **Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Seychelles, Tanzania, and Kenya**.
   - **About Hydrography:** Study of **physical features** of oceans, seas, coastal areas, lakes, and rivers, includes **measuring tides, currents**, and predicting changes over time.
   - **Significance:** Strengthens India-Mauritius **maritime partnership** and **regional cooperation**.
     - Aligns with India's vision of **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)**.

7. **India's Deep Ocean Mission:** India is set to launch its first human underwater submersible (Deep-Sea Manned Vehicle) this year, according to the Government of India.
   - **About:** Deep-Sea Manned Vehicle will operational at **500 meters depth** in 2025, but the target to reach **6,000 meters depth** by 2026.
     - Positions India among the **top six nations** with deep-sea exploration technology, and developed using **100% indigenous technology**.
   - **Alignment with Other Missions**: Coincides with the **Gaganyaan Space Mission**, marking dual scientific achievements.
   - **Economic and Scientific Impact**: Aims to boost the **blue economy** through resource discovery, including: **Critical minerals**, **rare metals**, and **marine biodiversity**.